

City of Columbia Heights 2012

Water Quality Report



The City of Columbia Heights is issuing the results of monitoring done on its drinking water for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2011. The purpose of this report is to advance consumers' understanding of drinking water and to heighten awareness of the need to protect precious water resources.

The City of Columbia Heights provides drinking water to its residents from a surface water source: purchased, treated water from the City of Minneapolis, which obtains its water from a surface water source, the Mississippi River.

The water provided to customers may meet drinking water standards, but the Minnesota Department of Health has determined that one or more of the sources of water is potentially susceptible to contamination. If you wish to obtain the entire source water assessment regarding your drinking water, please call 651-201-4700 or 1-800-818-9318 (press 5) during normal business hours. Also, you can view it online at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/water/swp/swa

Call Public Works Superintendent Lauren McClanahan at 763-706-3700 if you have questions about the City of Columbia Heights drinking water or would like information about opportunities for public participation in decisions that may affect the quality of the water.

No contaminants were detected at levels that violated federal drinking water standards. However, some contaminants were detected in trace amounts that were within legal limits. The table on the next page shows the contaminants that were detected in trace amounts last year. (Some contaminants are sampled less frequently than once a year; as a result, not all contaminants were sampled for in 2011. If any of these contaminants were detected the last time they were sampled for, they are included in the table along with the date that the detection occurred.)

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. Food and Drug Administration regulations establish limits for contaminants in bottled water, which must provide the same protection for public health.

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk.

More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.

Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.

Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.

Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.

Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

Lead - If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. City of Columbia Heights is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing materials, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>

Radon - Radon is a radioactive gas which is naturally-occurring in some groundwater. It poses a lung cancer risk when gas is released from water into the air (as occurs during showering, bathing, or washing dishes or clothes) and a stomach cancer risk when it is ingested. Because radon in indoor air poses a much greater health risk than radon in drinking water, an Alternative Maximum Contaminant Level (AMCL) of 4,000 picoCuries per liter may apply in states that have adopted an Indoor Air Program, which compels citizens, homeowners, schools, and communities to reduce the radon threat from indoor air. For states without such a program, the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 300 pCi/l may apply. Minnesota plans to adopt an Indoor Air Program once the Radon Rule is finalized.

2011 Test Results

Detected Substance (unit)	MCLG	MCL	Average Result	Range of Detections	Typical Source of Substances in Drinking Water	Meets Standard
Fluoride (ppm)	4.0	4.0	1.1	1-1.1	State of Minnesota requires all municipal water systems to add fluoride to the drinking water to promote strong teeth; Erosion of natural deposits; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.	✓
Haloacetic Acids (HAA5) (ppb)	0	60	16.4	1.1-21.7	By-product of drinking water disinfection.	✓
Nitrate as Nitrogen (ppm)	10.4	10.4	0.7	N/A	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septic tanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.	✓
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) (ppb)	0	80	25.78	14.8-31.5	By-product of drinking water disinfection	✓
Turbidity (NTU)	N/A	TT; <0.3 95% of the time	100% of samples < 0.3	0.26 NTU Highest Measurement	Soil runoff.	✓
Chlorine (ppm)	4 MRDLG	4 MRDL	2.3 Highest Quarterly Avg.	1.8-3.0 Highest and Lowest Monthly Avg.	Water additive used to control microbes.	✓
Copper (ppm) (7/13/2010)	1.3	1.3 AL	90% of samples < 0.08	0 out of 30 samples tested > 1.3 ppm	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.	✓
Lead (ppb) (7/13/2010)	0	15 AL	90% of samples < 4.7	1 out of 30 samples tested > 15 ppb	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits.	✓
Sodium (ppm)	-	-	12.6	N/A	Erosion of natural deposits.	✓
Sulfate (ppm)	-	-	28.4	N/A	Erosion of natural deposits.	✓

Key to Abbreviations:

MCL- Maximum Contaminant Level: The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

MCLG- Maximum Contaminant Level Goal: The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Some contaminants do not have Maximum Contaminant Levels established for them. These unregulated contaminants are assessed using state standards known as health risk limits to determine if they pose a threat to human health. If unacceptable levels of an unregulated contaminant are found, the response is the same as if an MCL has been exceeded; the water system must inform its customers and take other corrective actions.

TT - Treatment Technique: A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

NTU - Nephelometric Turbidity Unit: Used to measure clarity in drinking water. Turbidity is a measure of the clarity of the water. We measure it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.

MRDL- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level.

MRDLG- Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal.

AL- Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement which a water system must follow.

Average/Result - This is the value used to determine compliance with federal standards. It sometimes is the highest value detected and sometimes is an average of all the detected values. If it is an average, it may contain sampling results from the previous year.

90th Percentile Level: This is the value obtained after disregarding 10 percent of the samples taken that had the highest levels. (For example, in a situation in which 10 samples were taken, the 90th percentile level is determined by disregarding the highest result, which represents 10 percent of the samples.) Note, in situations where only 5 samples are taken, the average of the 2 highest samples is taken to determine the 90th percentile level.

ppb- Parts per billion, which can also be represented as micrograms per liter (µ/l).

ppm- Parts per million, which can also be expressed as milligrams per liter (mg/l).

N/A- Not applicable (does not apply).